

Gender equality and decent work: CIM works with CARICOM authorities to build awareness and capacity

[Washington, DC, 21 April 2010] The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OAS), in partnership with the Department of Social Development and Employment (SEDI), the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) and Guyana's Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security held a workshop on *Gender-Responsive Strategic Planning* in Georgetown, Guyana on April 12-14, 2010. This sub-regional workshop entitled: "Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective," brought together technical personnel from the CARICOM Ministries of Gender and Labor in order to build awareness and develop capacity on gender issues in labor processes.

Organized within the context of the CIM project *Gender Equality in the Context of "Decent Work"*, which is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), this was the first in a series of sub-regional workshops that aim to respond to the specific needs identified in the recently-released RIAL study: "[Institutionalization of a Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor in the Americas](#)" (2009), including:

- Building awareness and skills for gender mainstreaming;
- Identifying approaches to integrate gender perspectives in the Ministries of Labor within the context of the "Decent Work" framework adopted by the ILO;
- Establishing indicators that can be used by the Ministries to monitor progress on gender mainstreaming;
- Improving inter-sectoral coordination at the national and sub-regional levels.

The CIM workshop coincided with the 19th meeting of the CARICOM Community Council of Ministers for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), and the 17th International Labour Organization (ILO) Meeting of Caribbean Labor Ministers (April 14-16, 2010, Georgetown, Guyana). This is the first time that these bodies have participated in a joint meeting, which addressed, among other areas, the decent work agenda with a focus on gender and labor.

The CIM was invited to present the results of its workshop during the opening session of this meeting (April 14th). This was the first time that the OAS has had the opportunity to present at a meeting of the COHSOD and it marked an important milestone in strengthening the collaboration between the CARICOM Community and the Inter-American System. During this session, the CIM called on COHSOD Ministers of Labor to support the organization of a High-level Dialogue between Ministries of Labor and National Machineries for the Advancement of Women, with a view to promoting gender



Opening session of the workshop

[from left to right]: Hon. Manzoor Nadir (Minister of Labor, Guyana); Trevor Thomas (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security, Guyana); Halima Sa'adia Kassim, (Deputy Program Manager, Culture and Community Development, Gender Affairs, CARICOM Secretariat); Hon. Andranie Chandarpal (M.P. Commissioner of Women and Gender Equality of Guyana and former President of CIM); Maria Celina Conte (CIM/OAS Representative); Maria Claudia Camacho (OAS Representative); Paula Robinson (ILO Representative); Norma Shorey-Bryan (Workshop Facilitator)



Participants in the workshop

mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor through the creation and/or development of Gender Specialized Units or similar mechanisms.

This first sub-regional workshop will be followed by three others over the course of this year: one for Central America (El Salvador, May 2010), one for the MERCOSUR region (Asunción, August 2010) and one for the Andean Region (Quito, October 2010). The results of these workshops will also feed into additional High-Level Dialogues between Ministries of Labor and National Machineries for the Advancement of Women, which aim to advance a hemispheric agenda on gender-responsive labor policy.

*The **Organization of American States (OAS)** is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American State (October 1889 to April 1890). It was established in 1948 with the aim of achieving among the States of the Americas "an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence." The OAS prioritizes four pillars - democracy, human rights, security, and development – that support each other and are intertwined through political dialogue, inclusiveness, cooperation, and legal and follow-up instruments that provide the OAS with the tools to maximize its work in the Hemisphere.*

*Established in 1928, the **Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)** was the first official inter-governmental agency in the world created expressly to ensure recognition of the civil and political rights of women. CIM is made up of 34 Principal Delegates, one for each member state, and has become the principal forum for debating and formulating policy on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Americas*